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## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Neeser et al.  
Appl. No.: PCT/EP00/01795  
Filed: March 2, 2000  
Title: LACTOBACILLUS STRAINS PREVENTING DIARRHOEA PATHOGENIC BACTERIA  
Art Unit: Unknown  
Examiner: Unknown  
Docket No.: 112843-030

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, DC 20231

## PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

In the Claims:Please amend Claims 3-4 and 7-13 as follows:

A1 3. (Once Amended) The Lactobacillus strain according to claim 1, which is capable of growing in the presence of up to 0.4 % bile salts.

4. (Once Amended) The Lactobacillus strain according to claim 1, which is selected from the group consisting of Lactobacillus rhamnosus and Lactobacillus paracasei.

7. (Once Amended) A method for preparing an ingestable support material comprising using a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

A2 8. (Once Amended) The method according to claim 7, wherein the Lactobacillus strain is contained in the ingestable support material in an amount from about  $10^5$  cfu / g to about  $10^{12}$  cfu / g support material.

9. (Once Amended) A method for preparing an ingestable support comprising the steps of using a supernatant of a culture of a lactic acid bacterium strain belonging to the genus Lactobacillus having the capability of preventing colonization of the intestine with pathogenic bacteria causing diarrhoea.

10. (Once Amended) The method of claim 9, wherein the ingestable support is a food composition selected from the group consisting of milk, yogurt, curd, cheese, fermented milks, milk based fermented products, ice-creams, fermented cereal based products, milk based powders, and infant formulae.